A

VINDICATION

OF THE

HONOUR and PRIVILEGES

OF THE

Commons of *Great-Britain.*

With the CASE of

PLACE-MEN in PARLIAMENT,

Considered Impartially.

——— *tantumne ab re tua eſt otii tibi*
Aliena ut cures ———?
Homo ſum. ———Ter.

LONDON:

Printed for J. ROBERTS, near the *Oxford-Arms* in *Warwick-Lane*, M DCC XL.

(Price Six-Pence.)

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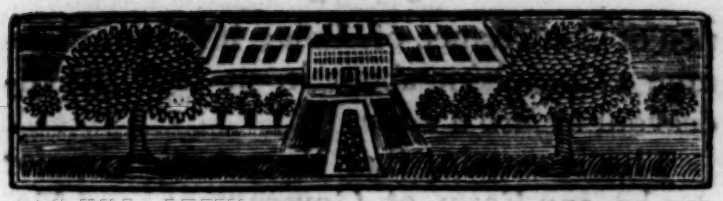

A VINDICATION OF THE HONOUR and PRIVILEGES OF THE COMMONS of *Great-Britain*, &c.

IN the ſeveral Diſputes ariſing from ſome late and preſent Occurrences, concerning (*as they are ſtiled*) Place-Men in *Parliament*, theſe few, as leading Queſtions, are chiefly conſiderable. How far is that an Evil in itſelf? How far may it be ſo by Accident? In *either Caſe*, What Remedy does it admit of? If, in itſelf, it is really no Evil, ſo far there is nothing to be ſaid againſt Place-Men. If, *by Accident*, it may be, but yet in the Nature of Things, that *poſſible* Evil is not to be avoided by any Cau-

tion or Contrivance of *Law*; it is in vain to urge a Complaint about it, at leaſt, to endeavour at *ſuch a Law*.

This is certain, that there neither is, nor can be any Form of Government, any Method of Adminiſtration wholly free from Exceptions; ſo that the utmoſt which may be expected, or ſhould be deſired, is that Form and that Method, which is liable to the leaſt and feweſt; and whoever aims at more Perfection in either, than conſiſts with human Eſtabliſhments and human Frailties, muſt be looked upon as a mere Viſionary, or *ſomething worſe*: If his Schemes of Reformation ſtrike at the Eſſence, the neceſſary conſtituent Parts or Appendages of Government in general, of ours in particular, and there is room to think it no Error of his Judgment, but the Fault of his Will, he deſerves the heavieſt Cenſure; inſtead of being reputed a Patriot, to be ſtigmatized as an *Incendiary*, * as an avowed Enemy to the Peace and Happineſs of his Country.

That a Member of Parliament holding a Place of Truſt, *&c.* under the Government is not *malum per ſe*, a Thing abſolutely Evil, I take

* CROMWELL tampering in this Sort, *viz.* to render the People jealous of the Parliament; a Conſultation was held at the Earl of *Eſſex*'s Houſe about accuſing him as an Incendiary; it was even moved (according to the Temper of thoſe Times) to arreſt him as ſuch, and only waited in Expectation of plainer Evidence; by which the Opportunity was unhappily loſt, as the Sequel of that Story but too plainly ſhews. *Rapin* Vol. II. Page 512. (Note 3.)

take for granted, both from the Nature of the Thing, and becauſe our Reformers plead only to reduce and limit the Number of them. To judge then of the accidental Evil, which the preſent Number, according to them, may occaſion; we are to conſider the Complaint, which is, the *Poſſibility* of a *Suſpicion* of *undue* Influence, by Means of theſe Places, upon the Votes of *ſuch* as may happen to enjoy them. In this View, we have heretofore ſeen printed Liſts of Members diſtinguiſhed by their Poſts and Offices, and their Manner of voting, in certain Inſtances, offered in Proof of their Partiality, or, as ſome have choſe to call it, Corruption, thereby, intended to be inſinuated. The common Anſwer to which (*by Way of Repriſal*) has been, the Poſſibility of, at leaſt, equal Partiality, or Corruption of *thoſe* in the Oppoſition, through the Want and Deſire of thoſe Places that others have; and their Hopes, thereby, of, *one Day*, obtaining them; and their *general Method* of voting has been urged in Support of this, I can't but ſay with equal Probability; and, no doubt, one Extreme is as blameable, being equally pernicious, as the other; for, certainly, ſuppoſing any *ſuch Caſes* to be, he that oppoſes againſt his Conſcience, to get a Place, is as much bribed as he that *complies* to keep one: And if too great a Complaiſance to the *Crown* may endanger our Liberties on the one Hand; ſo from a

pre-

pretended Maintenance of them, under a contrary Diſpoſition in Parliament, the People of *England* have experienced *real Servitude* on the other.* However, with regard to Party Merit, thus to accuſe, and recriminate, is alike begging the Queſtion on both Sides; it remains, therefore, that ſome other and more certain Rule of judging be pitched upon, whereby to determine the reſpective Merits of each dividing Party; a Diſquiſition foreign to my preſent Purpoſe, which is only (as a Matter of neceſſary Speculation *at this Time*) to conſider *impartially* the Expediency or Inexpediency (*as it may be at all Times*) of paſſing a Law *to reduce and limit the Number of Place-Men in Parliament.* A Queſtion not a little intereſting, even in this Reſpect, as different Perſons are intended to gain or loſe Reputation by the different Reception it meets with; and for *that Reaſon*, as well as on Account of its *natural* Tendency, it deſerves to be well conſidered; and, in the firſt Place, apart, wholly detatched from any other Matters, with which it has no neceſſary Connection, (eſpecially ſuch as have already been the Subject of Controverſy among us) as a mere Problem, in the moſt abſtracted View of *Men* and *Things*; after which to give every Conſideration its due Weight, ſome collateral Reaſons may take Place; as Phyſicians, beſides the preſent acute Complaint,

* *Rapin* of the long Parliament.

plaint, will always have Regard to the chronical Habit and Humours of their Patient.

It would certainly argue great Ignorance, to ſay, that Honour, Favour, Power, Profit, conferred, are Things of ſuch Indifference, as to make no Impreſſions upon ingenuous Minds; and, if poſſible, a yet greater Degree of Credulity, to think that a Thirſt after *any* of them, attended with Diſappointment, is not alſo a Biaſs, liable to raiſe our Paſſions, to prejudice our Affections and Judgments, and to *influence* our Actions accordingly: And in what Body of Men may we *ever* expect to find any Number of Perſons, ſo philoſophical, ſo wholly *diſintereſted*, * as to be quite regardleſs of theſe Things?

If then, to act with the common *Paſſions* of a Man, be the Mark of *Corruption*, to whatever Exceſs *they* may be carried, or in whatever Senſe *that* ſhall be underſtood, there is Danger of its being ſo much *greater* on the Side of the *diſappointed*, by how much they may happen to be, (as they will, *muſt* generally be) the Majority; and ſo much *worſe*, as Perſons, in thoſe Circumſtances, are apt to be carried away with Anger and Impatience, to be leſs careful, leſs judicious about their Meaſures; by which Means, it often comes

* A Qualification no where exiſting, yet abſolutely requiſite in a M——r of P——t, according to *Common Senſe*. November 17.

comes to paſs that the Innocency of them is wholly owing to their want of Succeſs.

This, it will, perhaps, be ſaid, is granting, if not proving the Evil complained of, and pointing, (*as a Remedy*) to the propoſed Expedient of *reducing and limiting the Number of Place-Men in the Houſe of Commons.* As the whole Controverſy proceeds upon what has been, and may be, (it being an agreed Point, that there is nothing like it at preſent) I may grant the Poſſibility of the Evil, without affronting or exempting any Party. I wiſh, I could as readily concur in thinking the propoſed Expedient a Remedy; on the contrary, I ſuſpect it would be a Means to heighten the Diſeaſe, and to increaſe the Malignity of it. For, to put a probable Caſe; If, at any Time, there may be many more Places, in *Imagination*, than in Reality, or, more Perſons contending and expecting than *can* ſucceed and be ſatisfied in their Expectations, in that Caſe, the reducing and limiting the Number of Places will but heighten the Odds, increaſe the Number of Expectants in Proportion, conſequently make Diſappointments more frequent, Reſentments, in Courſe, more ſtrong, and Conteſts and Struggles about them proportionably more violent; and as the *Conſequences* thereof ſeem to be what we complain and are afraid of, this Scheme, inſtead of preventing, is moſt likely to promote them.

But

But theſe being Evils only by Accident, which may or may not happen, though they ſhould be found not to admit of a Remedy by any human Law, we may be under leſs Fear and Apprehenſion about them, if they can be thought not ſo frequent and general, as it has been affected to repreſent them; and which may not ſeem incredible, if it ſhall appear that the very ſame Effects, which are there attributed to *Places*, may be derived from other Cauſes often confounded with them, and which would ſubſiſt in the ſame Force, if *thoſe* were reduc'd and limited, or even entirely taken away.

Admitting the Poſſibility alike to *all* Parties, it is not neceſſary to involve Numbers of *any* in the Suſpicion of real Corruption. It is equally poſſible to act right upon wrong Principles, as for a Miſtake to be attended with an honeſt Intention: particular Perſons may go corruptly with a Party, even where the Majority have the pureſt Views imaginable. Suppoſe, for Inſtance, in any future Houſe of Commons, ſome great Place-Men to be of the Privy-Council, where *ſome Meaſures* muſt *neceſſarily* be concerted, which, *as neceſſarily*, muſt have the Approbation and Sanction of Parliament; there is no Abſurdity in believing *theſe* may be the Subject of free Diſcourſe and Debate *in Council*, and the Reſult, what *ſhould* be the Reſult of all *ſuch* Conſultations, a general Acquieſcence in

thoſe Meaſures, for which the ſtrongeſt Reaſons ſhall appear, in the Opinion of all, or moſt of them. If then, the *ſame* being reconſider'd by them in their Legiſlative Capacity, they ſhould find no Reaſon to alter their Judgments, *notwithſtanding their Places*, there would lie no juſt Objection to their Conduct; nor could it be thought ſtrange, that what ſeemed right and reaſonable to them, ſhould appear ſo to many others alſo, while yet it might not be impoſſible for ſome to be with them implicitly, in the Spirit of Party, and with a View to Party Advantages.

The like may be ſuppoſed of Gentlemen, who may happen to be in the Oppoſition, in which ſome may be governed by Principle and Opinion, while others may fall in with them merely for the ſake of Oppoſition, without giving themſelves the trouble of conſidering, or even againſt the Convictions of their own Minds; and if an anonymous Teſtimony was not quite ridiculous, I have an Example * before me, after which I cou'd, with at leaſt equal Truth, ſay ſomething here to the Purpoſe.

In this way much may be accounted for, of what we ſee in *Parliament*, without recurring to thoſe inviduous Inſinuations, and odious Appellations, which have been ſo liberally dealt out by *ſome*, by which it has been

* *Addreſs to the Electors, and other free Subjects of* Great Britain.

been endeavoured to repreſent us in a very bad Situation; *ſuch* as * confeſſedly, *it is far from being credible, that we either now are or ever ſhall be in*, to borrow an Argument from the Writer I have juſt quoted, the contrary *is a Calumny too groſs to be impoſed upon the moſt prejudiced, and the moſt credulous; the bare Recollection of the Names of the Gentlemen concerned, the Quality of many, the Property of moſt of them*, their private Characters *ſufficiently confute it.*

However, ſuch, it ſeems, is the Nature of Party Acrimony; and what is highly improbable to be the Effect of Corruption of the *low, ſordid, venal* Kind, is plainly *Faction*, another Species of it, not leſs dangerous for being of a more complicated Nature, taking in ſome *noble*, with ſome *ignoble Paſſions*: a Misfortune we might not expect to be more free from, were there no Places; or, which comes to the ſame thing, were ALL Place-Men alike. We might not, even in that Caſe, expect a Harmony of Votes. Mens Underſtandings will be as different as their Statures and Complexions: Hence will ariſe a Diverſity of Opinions, and moſt Men will be apt to contend earneſtly and warmly for their own, and what comes neareſt to their own; this Pride alone is ſufficient for all the Purpoſes of Contention, as Contention is

 ſufficient

* *Addreſs to the Electors, &c.*

ſufficient to produce every other Evil incident to Society.

It is hard to ſay upon what Principles Men always act; ſeveral Perſons will have their ſeveral Motives; but if we conſider what is moſt likely to be the *ruling Motive* in thoſe who aſpire to a Seat in *Parliament*, it can't be thought to be *Avarice*, the *Deſire* of *amaſſing Wealth*, becauſe every body, who knows any thing of the World, knows it to be, of all Methods for *that Purpoſe*, moſt fallible. A Man may, with leſs Hazard, and almoſt equal Certainty, depend upon making his Fortune out of a Lottery. It may with much more Probability be judged to be no illaudable Deſire of making a Figure in their Country, of being conſpicuous and uſeful in Life.

It is Matter of Honour and Diſtinction, to be choſe the Repreſentative of any *Body of Men* in Parliament. This induces Candidates; and the ſame Spirit, which brings Gentlemen into the *Houſe*, will generally be found to attend them *there*. Many of them will be Members of *Conſequence*. That indeed is not in every one's Choice; however, they who have it in their Power, *i. e.* are bleſſed with ſuperior Talents, and are not depreſſed with Modeſty, will exert that Superiority, as Occaſion offers; they will be Leaders, and, according to the Side they take, and the *Chance* of that Side, they will be *nominally* Patriots,

Patriots *, or *really* Place-men, if it ſuits their Taſte; and one of their great Ends will be anſwered, with no ſmall Share of Self-complacency, in *thus* finding, they are of Weight and Significancy with their *Friends* or *Party*. And upon theſe Principles, and for theſe Reaſons, were Places entirely out of the Queſtion, Diviſions would be a Paſſion for Fame and Victory, Self-Love, and Self-Will would operate in much the like Manner, and have much the ſame Effect, we ſee them have in the preſent State of Things.

The Effects of *Faction*, we know, are bad enough; a *ſtrong Inſtance* of it we have, not long ſince, ſeen, in a violent Clamour for a War (not without juſt Occaſion of War) and, at the *ſame Time*, from the *ſame Quarter*, a Cabal formed, or endeavoured to be formed, to obſtruct the neceſſary Means of carrying it on; a wonderful Inſtance this of *true Zeal* for the Honour and *Trade of their* Country. But can we hope that Faction would abate, in Proportion, as the Number of Place-men in Parliament are reduced and limited? No: If Places are a Stem, on which *Faction* grows, the lopping off Part will but make it take deeper Root, and ſhoot forth in more luxuriant Branches; if they are Matter of Strife and Conteſt in Parliament, in their preſent Number; by reducing the Number, the Strife will

* And tho' they changed their Titles, that would not alter the Nature of Perſons and Things.

will be increaſed; and according as Debates, and Struggles, and Diviſions are *within Doors*, ſo will *Faction* be *without*. It increaſes with the Increaſe of them, and ſtrengthens with their Strength; and *as much* Strength as *Faction* gains in the Kingdom, *ſo much* does the Government loſe of its Power at home, and Weight and Credit abroad. The beſt to be expected from Increaſe of Faction, is Weakneſs of Government —— A Bleſſing, which no Man, but a good Subject, a good Friend, or faithful Ally will envy us. FRANCE and SPAIN would rejoice in the Succeſs of *ſuch our preſent* PATRIOTISM, as I doubt not but they heartily approve, if they don't contribute ſomething to the Appearance of it. Certainly, *other Powers* will always take ſome of their Meaſures, from what they obſerve of that Kind; as it cannot be doubted that one of the chief Encouragements of the late Conduct of the Court of *Spain* toward us, aroſe from *the Heats and Animoſities which were ſo induſtriouſly fomented among us.*

Of all the Efforts we have lately ſeen from that Side, whence the preſent Project is known originally to proceed, it is what moſt People ſee through clearly, as a Piece of *mere Grimace* and *ſhameleſs Hypocriſy*, while the Party Inclinations of too many will not permit them to explode it, in the Manner they know it deſerves —— Nay, ſome, who think tolerably of the *Thing*, have nevertheleſs a very

very mean Opinion of the *Perſons* who are chief Actors in this Farce. For it muſt not be diſſembled, that there are ſome few, who, not having ſufficiently conſidered the Point and Mankind in that particular View, are almoſt perſuaded that no Place-men ſhould be in Parliament. *Eutopian Notions!* All Schemes too fine ſpun for human Nature, are ſo many Cobwebs in *civil* or *eccleſiaſtical Polity*; tho' that has not hindered worthy Perſons, of warm Imaginations, from ſometimes falling under Deluſions of this Sort.

It is allowed by all Perſons of Experience and Conſideration, that ſome are, by the Nature of their Places, very properly Members of Parliament; and ſhould an Opinion, or rather a Faction, at any time prevail ſo far, as to limit the Number, I deny that it would anſwer the End propoſed, alledged at leaſt, which is, *ſo far*, to procure an abſolute Bill of Divorce, an entire Separation between *Members* of *Parliament* and *Places*, and all Regard to the Diſpoſition of Places. For, notwithſtanding the vehement Outcry made for this Regulation by weekly Writers, *&c.* with *ſome* witty, *more* dull but rude Invectives, I take it to be an *Impoſſibility* owing to the *Nature* of our Government, which is mixed, and to *that* of Mankind, who are not to be diveſted of their *natural Appetites* and *Paſſions*.

Our

Our Government (by the very Deſign of it) conſiſts of three diſtinct (not independent) Parts, of which the *King* is as the *Head*, the *Lords* and *Commons* repreſent the *Body*. What an *Union* as well as *Balance* is hereby intended and created, and how they *jointly* contribute to the common Peace and Safety, I need not ſay. For the Defence of the Kingdom and Support of Government, a ſuitable Revenue is allotted by the Wiſdom of the whole Legiſlature, divided into two unequal Parts; *one*, called the *Civil Liſt*, is rightly appropriated to the Uſe of the *Crown*, to ſupport the *Honour* and *Dignity* thereof; *the other* conſtitutes a great *Fund*, or *national Purſe*, for the Supply of all the other *Exigences* of *State*. This *Honour* and *Dignity* of the *Crown*, theſe *Exigences of State*, neceſſarily require many *Heads* and *Hands*, and conſequently create a large Number of *Places*, both of *Truſt* and *Power*, which muſt neceſſarily be filled by Perſons of *Ability* and *Integrity*, who in courſe muſt have Appointments equal to the *Dignity*, and *Truſt*, and *Trouble*. The only Objection here is, that Gentlemen ſit in *Parliament* in one Capacity as Repreſentatives of the Body of the People, but as Place-Men they ſuſtain another Character, *may* ſerve another Intereſt, that of the *Crown*, by which means we are told * we may become *Slaves to the Crown*. — A moſt invidious Suggeſtion!

As

* *Addreſs to the Electors*, &c.

As if the Intereſt of the Crown and the People, *rightly underſtood*, were not exactly the ſame; or, as if the temporary Advantages of Places could eaſily be thought an *Equivalent* to *ſuch* Gentlemens *Honour*, their *Conſciences*, and their COUNTRY; in which laſt (I ſpeak of the preſent Gentlemen in that Situation) the moſt angry and the moſt prejudic'd *muſt* acknowledge them to have no ſmall Share, at the ſame time that they *do* acknowledge them to have a very quick Senſe of and due Regard to their own particular Intereſts. What then if the *Crown* hath *two Parts* in theſe Gentlemen? If *their Country* have *ten*, it is a reaſonable Security for their Attachment to the Country, eſpecially in all fundamental Caſes; and we have the more reaſon to be ſatisfied with it, if it is the beſt Security which the nature of Things will allow of, as indiſputably it is, if moving and keeping Place-Men from Parliament *(to all the Intents and Purpoſes alledged)* is found to be, as I have already hinted, and do really account it, *wholly impoſſible*.

For after all our Refinements *in Theory*, *Power* and Profit *in Fact*, according to their nature, will go together ſo long as *Men* are *Men*, and while *thoſe* in *Power* are not too indolent to take the *Trouble* attending the *Profit*. And the *Power* of PARLIAMENT is too great to ſuffer a Reſtraint upon *its Members*, which is not likely to ſuit their own

Minds. Let him that thinks otherwiſe aſk himſelf theſe following Queſtions, — Who grants the Supplies for the current Service? *The Parliament.* —— When is the King ſaid to do right? *When he acts by the Advice of his Parliament*; and *vice versâ.* —— When are we reputed eaſy at home, and in conſequence thereof reſpected abroad? *When a good Agreement ſubſiſts between the* KING *and his* PARLIAMENT. —— But ſuch Agreement cannot be without a good Underſtanding between the *two Houſes* of *Parliament.* Now the Scheme of this Reduction and Limitation, *&c. (if it take place)* rightly enough * ſuppoſes, that the *Houſe of Lords* will ſhare all the great *Offices* of *State*; and no doubt *they would be very ſafely entruſted with Perſons of that exalted Rank and Honour.* —— The Queſtion is, how the COMMONS, not only *now*, but at ALL TIMES *hereafter*, may reliſh this BILL of EXCLUSION? Is not this *alone* an unanſwerable Objection, the Danger of creating Diſcontent, Jealouſies and Animoſities, which might iſſue in open Ruptures between the *two Houſes?* Might there not be danger of its inflaming *ſome future Commoners* with a ſtronger Paſſion for, and more ardent Deſire of *Peerage* than would be convenient? Might it not, in many Views, open a wider Door for *Faction*, and be a means more effectually to let in upon us *all thoſe Evils*, which (ſome would

* *Addreſs to the Electors*, &c.

would have it believ'd) are hereby intended to be prevented?

Had the COMMONS never been admitted to any of the *great Offices*, their preſent *rich* and *powerful*, *growing Circumſtances* might make a Door of Entrance for them *reaſonable* and *neceſſary* —— But, having been, for Ages, in Poſſeſſion of this Privilege, what Heart-burning and Confuſion a Regulation attended with a Reſtriction of this Sort (directly, or by Conſequence) would occaſion, a Man may foretel without the Spirit of Prophecy. Is this then the *ſalutary Law** we have heard ſo much of? Are theſe *the invaluable Bleſſings of a Place-Bill?* Do our ſuppoſed Reformers ſee theſe Miſchiefs from their Scheme, which are ſo obvious? If they do, where is their *Patriotiſm* or HONESTY? If they do not, where is their POLICY *or good Senſe?* If *Monopolies*, in TRADE, have always been looked upon as injurious to the *publick Good*, and CHARTERS *excluſive*, reckoned ſo many *Clogs* upon *common* Wealth, as being *Cramps* to *particular*, *private* Induſtry; by the ſame way of Reaſoning, it would be an *Injury*, it would be *falſe Policy* for *great Offices* not to lye open without Diſtinction of *Peers* or *Commoners*, elder or younger Brothers, to Perſons of the *beſt Capacity*, in order to their being diſcharged in the *very beſt Manner*.

* *Addreſs*, &c.

" In every regular Society, there muſt be " Offices of Eminence and Diſtinction, to be " filled by the moſt deſerving Members, for " the Benefit of the whole." And to be *ſo* deſerving, " is a laudable Emulation, or Am- " bition, if you pleaſe, inſeparable from in- " genuous Minds —— It is the great Spur to " Induſtry, the great Incentive to generous " and arduous Deſigns; without this every " Branch of ſocial and publick Virtue muſt " languiſh and decay —— The young *London* " Apprentice is allowed to pleaſe himſelf " with the Thoughts of being *Sheriff*, or " *Alderman*, at leaſt, if not *Lord Mayor*: " The *Cadet* may have hopes of being a *Ge-* " *neral*, and *the Student at the Inns of Court* " expect to be *Lord High Chancellor of Great* " *Britain*. This innocent Vanity is the na- " tural Root, the real Ground of all *political* " *Virtue* and *publick* Safety: It is this, and " this only that diſtinguiſhes the Brave, the " Learned and the Worthy, from the Ignorant, " the Lazy, the Undeſerving, in all Ranks, " Orders, and Profeſſions." And is it fit this generous Emulation, which has furniſhed out *ſo many Worthies*, ſhould now be confined to thoſe alone who are *born* Noble, and even to thoſe, according to their Proſpect of *actual Peerage?* How many younger Brothers of *brave Spirit* and *fine Genius*, who now are willing to *toil* and *expoſe* themſelves in our *Fleets* and *Armies*, and who, in *other Ways*, are

are at no ſmall Pains to accompliſh themſelves for the *Service of their Country*, muſt receive ſome Diſcouragement from a Scheme, by which it is ſaid* *the Houſe* of *Lords will* NECESSARILY *ſhare* ALL *the great Offices?*

The ancient laudable Practice of the *Crown*, has been, for the eminent good Qualities, approved Abilities and Services of Gentlemen, in their reſpective *difficult high Stations* and *Offices*, to enoble *them*, and, for *their* Sakes, their Poſterity.——But, according to this Scheme, until *thoſe* of the very beſt Talents have the Honour of ſitting in the *upper Houſe*, they can have no great Opportunity of exerting them in the Service of their *Prince* and *Country*. This reminds me of a ridiculous Edict, I have heard of, *reſtraining Youth from going into the Water before they could ſwim.*

Might we not under ſuch a Policy fear a greater Scarcity than at preſent we have of Perſons duly qualified for *all* the ſeveral great Offices which the *State* cannot be without? What if there are never wanting Inſtances many among the *Peers*, and we have, at this time, an *illuſtrious one*, of a *Nobleman* of the firſt *Rank* and *Fortune* adorning a *great* and *arduous Office*, with equal *Abilities* and *Application?* The Examples of *Noblemen, ſo able*, and *ſo willing*, it muſt be ſaid, are not *too many*, nor probably *ever* will be, conſidering, that beſides a natural Genius and Turn of Mind,

* *Addreſs to the Electors*, &c. p. 49.

Mind, it requires *Uſe* and *Practice, Experience* and *Habit*, to perfect any Perſon for a *momentous Employ*, which is beſt attained by beginning *early*, and riſing *gradually* in what they profeſs; which is not *ordinarily* the Province of *elder Brothers born to ample Fortunes.*

Of ſuch as have ſignalized themſelves as *able Stateſmen* (any more than good Poets) there have aroſe but few in any one Age. It has been thought a plentiful Harveſt, which produced, at the ſame time, a *Cecil* and a *Walſingham*; as it is notorious, that of *all thoſe* who are celebrated *as ſuch* by our *Engliſh* Hiſtorians, the far greater Part of them made their firſt Appearance in the *Houſe of Commons*; in *which reſpect*, if that *honourable Houſe* may, at this Day, compare with (as I verily think it may) if it does not excel any Period of Time we can read of, I hope it is none of the Reaſons why they ſhould put on their own Chains, by ſubmitting to the propoſed Indignity. As to the Difference juſt obſerved, without any Reflection, there may this good Account, which I have in a manner hinted already, be given of it. If we conſult the Temper of Mankind in general, it is not *Difficulty* and *Danger*, *Hard-ſtudying*, *Watching* and *Labour*, which are the ultimate Object of Deſire, but *Reputation*, *Riches*, *Titles*, *Eaſe* at laſt; and it is not eaſy to imagine, that *too many* of thoſe who are bleſſed with a competent Share of them before-

before-hand, ſhould be over and above ſolicitous to repeat thoſe Labours, which their *virtuous Anceſtors* undertook, in ſome meaſure, for *their* Benefit.

This can't be denied, that all Men of good Parts, and natural or acquired Abilities, with ſprightly Induſtry, will ever make their Application where Promotion may be expected, (and no where elſe) as Rewards for their Hazard and Labour; whoever makes that a Queſtion, needs go no farther than to himſelf for an Anſwer. To love Trouble *upon its own Account*, is like the Love of *fighting* for *fighting ſake*; which is agreed by all Mankind to be the certain Sign of a *Coward*, where-ever that is pretended. If then all Men of *Parts*, *Ability* and *Induſtry* muſt be ſuppoſed alike inclined to ſome of the deſirable Advantages in Life, and none of theſe are to be had in the *Houſe of Commons*; who then, of courſe, are left to be our worthy Repreſentatives? Why, truly, the Dull, the Illiterate, and the Slothful, whom no People, not quite infatuated, would pick out for their Legiſlators, and to ſupport the Honour and Intereſt of their Country abroad, and the Liberties of their Fellow-Subjects at home. I think I need not purſue this Argument any farther, to which I have been led by the *allowed* Conſequences of a *Place-Bill*. I return to that taken from the *Poſſibility* of a *Suſpicion* of *Corruption*.

Theſe

Theſe Poſſibilities Party-Prejudice has a good Knack at improving into Suſpicion, and from thence to Certainty. How often have we ſeen this vicious Circle of reaſoning made uſe of? *Votes* firſt diſparaged on account of Place-Men, and *then* Place-Men condemned upon the Evidence of *thoſe Votes.* Whereas Corruption is ſeated in the *Heart* of Perſons, and not in *Places*; and a corrupt Heart, if the *Wiſdom* of Parliament cannot deſcry, their *Power* will not be able to hinder. Chuſe an uncorrupt *Parliament* without *Limitation of Places*, and where is the Danger? Suppoſe a corrupt one without *any Place-Men*, and where is the Security? —— But Places, it is ſaid, give Life and Birth and Nouriſhment to Corruption, *whenever that happens.* Shall we then utterly extinguiſh them? That is impoſſible! They have their Foundation in the *Exigencies* of the *State*, they are *eſſential* to the *Honour* and *Dignity* of the *Crown*; in regard to *both*, they are *neceſſary conſtituent Parts* and *Appendages* of *Government*; and to make them incompatible with a Seat in *Parliament (to all the Intents and Purpoſes alledged)* is beyond the Power of Law. Any one for that Purpoſe, contrive it as you can, will be evaded by one means or other, where the Diſpoſition to do it is ſtrong; and if the Number is reduced and limited, there will be the ſame Reſource for corrupt Diſpoſitions.

It is a Rule in Law, That *all Obligations (where the Condition is impoſſible) are mere Nullities, void in courſe*; and that is a ſufficient Reaſon why we ſhould not expect it from a *wiſe Body of Men* to go about to enact a Law, with a View to *Ends* and *Purpoſes* which common Underſtandings (as in this Caſe) muſt ſee it cannot anſwer. It may indeed lay Bars in the way of *ſome* more ſincere and open Tempers, which *ſome others*, leſs ſcrupulous, will break thro' without any Difficulty; and what is that but expoſing us ſtill more to the very Tempers and Perſons againſt whom we are ſuppoſed to be fencing? The Watch-word upon this Occaſion is, a Free Parliament, a *Cant-Term* lately * made uſe of to convey falſe and miſchievous Ideas, as alſo to cover (what their Friends were not a little conſcious of) the unparliamentary, unprecedented, not to ſay ſeditious and dangerous Conduct of certain Gentlemen in a *former*, and threatning † us with the like in *all ſubſequent Seſſions of the ſame*, in caſe this Affair particularly ſhould not go according to their Wiſhes. Suſpending for a Moment all Regard to the Merits of a Place-Bill, a little Hiſtory may be of uſe to help our Judgments in this Caſe. In the Year 1648, when Colonel *Pride*, with Soldiers, poſſeſſed the Doors of the Houſe of Commons, taking into Cuſtody ſuch of the Members as he

* *Addreſs to the Electors*, &c. † *Addreſs*, &c. p. 57.

thought fit (in Number 41.) Mr. *Whitelock* ſays (*p.* 355.) "ſeveral Members were at a Stand, whether they ſhould any more attend the Houſe or not, in regard to the Violence offered to many of them; and that it could not be eſteem'd a free Parliament. But (adds he) many of thoſe, upon Debate and Advice of Friends, and Conſideration that they were choſen by their Country to ſerve for them in this Parliament, and that the Violence was not offered to theſe, but to other Members (whereof they were not made the Judge, nor was it *left in their Power* to deſert the Parliament and their Truſt, whilſt they might have liberty to continue in that Service) theſe Reaſons perſuaded many to continue in that Truſt and Service." Here was a manifeſt, an egregious Violation of the Freedom of Parliament, in the Perſons of a large Number of Members; which yet we ſee was not thought ſufficient to warrant a Seceſſion in others. So far then from vindicating our late Seceders, who will take upon them to inſinuate the leaſt Colour of a Reaſon for it, from any want of Freedom in a Parliament, where it is notorious that at leaſt all proper uſual Liberty is both allowed and taken? Why, not to mention the *worthy Craftſman*, a certain Writer * has done it, who preſuming he alſo may impoſe upon his Countrymen at pleaſure, and ſtudying what will ſerve his Purpoſe,

* *Addreſs to the Electors*, &c.

poſe, rather than to ſay what is true, has had the marvellous Aſſurance to tell us, that the late Seceſſion *aroſe from no previous Concert among any of the Members, but was the Reſult of every Gentleman's private Judgment* *. This is an Evidence ſo thorough-pac'd, that *it*, with all he affirms beſides, deſervedly goes for nothing with unprejudiced thinking Perſons.

We are told by another Hand †, that a Place-Bill is nothing leſs than a *reaſonable, legal Security whether we are to continue a free People or not*; a Security, I ſuppoſe, that thoſe who have a Share in the Legiſlature, ſhall not conſent to the enſlaving of *themſelves* and *their Poſterity* along with their Conſtituents; of which, was the Danger, *i. e.* the Probability much greater than any honeſt Man of *real* common Senſe will pretend to ſay it is; yet when we talk of Security, we ſhould conſider what Things in their nature will bear.

All Power is a delegated Truſt, for which no Pledge can be contrived that is an exact Equivalent; conſequently, wherever it is lodged, there will always remain ſome Danger, *i. e.* a *phyſical Poſſibility* of its being abuſed; and a good moral Aſſurance to the contrary, is what, in many Caſes, we muſt be content with. After having uſed our beſt Judgments in electing Gentlemen of Family and Fortune,

* *Addreſs*, &c. pag. 56. † *Common Senſe*, Nov. 24.

with good private Characters, and of known Affection to the preſent Government, and our Conſtitution, we muſt *(for a Time)* depend upon the Honour and Conſciences of our Repreſentatives. If they are diſpoſed to accept, and his Majeſty think fit to confer on them a publick Employment, their Elections are, in moſt Caſes, vacated; when they are rechoſen, or they are not. If they are not, the Queſtion is at an End. If they are, 'tis a manifeſt Approbation on the Part of their Conſtituents, and the *King* muſt be ſaid, *ſo far*, to take *their* Senſe in what he does; which, if it will not be taken as a Compliment, cannot be looked upon as an Injury; as little can it be eſteemed, in *any Member of Parliament* (what the Writer, I have ſo often had occaſion to quote, has ridiculouſly affirmed) a * Deſertion of their Truſt equal to, nay worſe than that of *ſeceding*. And, conſidering that Places, and conſequently Place-men muſt be, and that (humanly ſpeaking) they will *always* be, many of them, *Members* of *Parliament*, under *any* Adminiſtration *whatſoever* (the contrary Suppoſition *(however it may ſerve a preſent Turn)* being a direct Affront to common Senſe, as it is a plain Contradiction to the Experience of all Men in all Ages) no Body of Men have Reaſon to take Offence at their Repreſentatives, *merely* for accepting a *Truſt* or *Power* from the *Crown*, without

* *Addreſs*, &c. p. 54, 55.

without ſome other Ground of Diſlike, or Suſpicion; they ought rather to be pleaſed, and rejoice at it, among others, for this obvious Reaſon, Who are ſo proper to fill Places of Truſt, as they who are beſt to be truſted? Who are ſo fit to repreſent us in Parliament, as they, whoſe Ability and Integrity is beſt to be relied on, in our own Opinions? the ſame good Qualities being requiſite in both, if the ſame Perſon is ſo happy *at once* in the good Opinion of his *Prince* and *Country* too, it is a good ſign, at leaſt, of an *honeſt*, *worthy*, *able* Man. It is a ſign of a good natural Intereſt well founded, that, tho' he is not carried upon the Wings of falſe Popularity, he has *real Merit*, a more ſolid Support, which upholds him in the Opinion of the moſt *conſiderate* and *valuable Part of his Electors*, than which nothing is more deſirable, except, *(what is impoſſible)* Perſons and Things which ſhall content or rather extinguiſh all Parties.

THEY will exiſt in ſome Shape while the World endures; where LIBERTY is, there will be *Faction*, and where there is an Inclination to it, there will never be wanting ſome Pretence for it. But, what is the *real Opinion* of the Promoters of this Scheme, may well be ſuſpected from the *Self-denying Ordinance*, in 1644, ſupported by a Petition from the *Citizens of London*, when ſo many gallant Men, and true Defenders of the Liberty of their Country were excluded, not with In-

tent

tent really to keep all *Place-men* out of Parliament, but to let *themſelves*, a RIVAL PARTY, in, as appeared too plainly by the Event; *which Ordinance* was not only the *Forerunner*, but the *Cauſe* of the total Diſſolution of the Government, and was foreſeen by Mr. *Whitelock* (as true a Lover of the Liberty of his Country, as ever did, or poſſibly ever may ſit within St. *Stephen*'s Chapel) who (*Page* 115 *of his Memoirs*) (after quoting a Speech at full Length made againſt that Ordinance, which it is above the Reach of our *weekly Scribblers* to anſwer) has theſe Words. "The Debate "held till late at Night, and then, upon the "Queſtion, (as ſome called it) *Envy* and "*Self-Ends* prevailing, the Ordinance paſſed "the Houſe, and was ſent to the Lords." This was the Judgment of that great Man, both of the *Thing*, and of the *Motives* of *thoſe* who carried it on; which was fully juſtified by what followed, for in leſs than five Years time, not only the KING was murthered, but the *Monarchy* was diſſolved, which they pretended only to reſtrain, the Houſe of PEERS voted *uſeleſs and dangerous*, and *that they ought to be aboliſhed*; and in three Years after that, the COMMONS themſelves were by Force turned out of Doors by the Principal Contriver of that Ordinance *in Perſon*, and bid, with Scorn, to take away that Fool's Bawble (*the Mace*;) after which, ſo weary were the People juſtly (even the City of *London* itſelf) under the Go-

vernment

vernment of theſe *Self-deniers*, after having tried it in all Manner of Shapes, that rather than bear it longer, they threw themſelves (with unparallel'd Joy) into the Arms of a Prince they had ſo often provoked (and juſt before abjured) without ſo much as ſecuring one ſingle Liberty, or even ſtipulating for an Indemnity, to ſave their *Self-denying* Friends and Leaders from the Gallows. This may be a proper Leſſon, not only for ſuch as are too apt to judge of Men's Deſigns by their open Profeſſions, but alſo to the Succeſſors of *thoſe* who were ſo feelingly concerned in the Conſequences of that *never to be forgotten Law*. A fatal Original! which, (with uncommon want of Modeſty, again, as contrary to all the Rules of Prudence) we are told * it is quite neceſſary we ſhould Copy after for *our future Preſervation*, that otherwiſe *our Conſtitution will be at an End* †. But ſurely, as *Place-men* have always ſat in the *Houſe of Commons* beyond any Memory or Tradition, till that *memorable Year* 44, the Precedent will afford no Reaſon to make the propoſed Alteration; ſince it is notorious that the Nation and its Liberties ſubſiſted many more *Ages* under that Diſtemper (if it was one) than they did *Years*, under that pretended Cure. *wiſe Men* won't follow *Quacks*, tho' they ſometimes perform great Cures.——But to follow *ſuch of them* as have been remarkable only for killing

* *Addreſs*, &c. p. 53. † P. 49.

killing their Patients, is a Degree of Folly, of which NO MAN knowingly was ever guilty.

Thus far I have treated, what is apparently a particular *Party-Project*, abſtractedly as I well could from all Party Conſiderations, *properly ſuch*; my Purpoſe being to ſee the real Merits of it, upon what good Foundation it ſtood, and how feaſible it was, *Men and Things conſidered*; and *therefore* I proceeded in it, not otherwiſe than as if ALL the Subjects of *Great Britain* were equally Friends to our Conſtitution, and alike well affected to the Perſon and Government of his preſent Majeſty, and to the *Proteſtant Succeſſion*; as if we were generally agreed about the ſame *good End*, only apt *(as Men)* to differ about the *Means*, or rather about certain Emoluments, which SOME muſt *neceſſarily* enjoy, and ALL in the ſame Situation cannot poſſibly partake of; in which View the reducing Scheme ſeems (at beſt) to be but a *chimerical Cure* for an *imaginary* Cauſe of Complaint, a *Complaint* exaggerated not only beyond Truth, but even beyond Probability; *a Cure* not capable of reaching the *Evil*, if it was *real*.

And therefore when the Cauſe aſſigned appears (as in this Caſe) to be no Cauſe, or next to none, ſome other latent Reaſons, which will not ſo well bear the Light, are much to be ſuſpected. One indeed there is, which

which almoſt every one more than ſuſpects, and which therefore I need not name. Beſides which, 'tis obſervable there is hardly in *England* one ſingle *Papiſt*, *Jacobite*, *Tory* or *Paſſive-Obedience Man*, who is not zealouſly inclin'd to this Scheme. Let any Man reflect upon the known Principles and Opinions of theſe Gentlemen, and judge whether their Motive be a ſuperſtitious Regard for the Year 1644, and a Veneration for the Memory of *thoſe* who had a chief Hand in that Tranſaction; or whether it is the Preſervation of the Proteſtant Religion, the Support of the preſent Royal Family, and the Defence of the Liberties of the People; or whether, recollecting the Conſequences of that Event, it is not more likely to be with a View to the Deſtruction of *them all*. I allow the Gentlemen called *diſcontented Whigs*, to be as free from any ſuch View, as the moſt zealous Courtiers.—— But the Queſtion is not what they intend, but what the Conſequence may be of their joining with thoſe Men. Few of the Preſbyterians, in the Beginning of the Year 1660, thought of bringing in the King; but when they joined with the *Cavaliers*, a Reſtoration ſoon followed. The City of *London* itſelf thought fit to ſwim with a Stream that then was out of their Power to ſtem, tho' *they* before had chiefly ſupported all the Schemes againſt the *Conſtitution*, from the Beginning to the End of thoſe *diſtracted*

Times, as they are often called by Mr. *Whitlock*. If then it is remember'd, (and methinks it ſhould not be quite forgot) *that there is a Popiſh Pretender to the Throne*,* that there are many Papiſts in *England*, &c. particularly that the City of *York* is remarkably full of them; which *(it is to be noted)* was the *firſt* Place in the Kingdom, where the *Common-Council* thought fit to follow the Example of the *Livery-Men* at *London*; WHERE alſo it is neither *impoſſible*, nor at all *improbable*, that *Popiſh Prieſts* and *Jeſuits* may ſwarm in Diſguiſe, even in *Republican* Shapes, in ſhort, in *any Shape* which may do hurt; WHERE *they* may be as active, as they are *always* artful, and as ſucceſsful *now* as *formerly* in fomenting Diviſions. —— If we conſider, that the TORIES among us are not a few; that, at certain Times, they have ALL of them been *conſequentially* JACOBITES; that many of them

* This was Q. *Elizabeth*'s Caſe; her Right to the Crown was always conteſted openly or tacitly. The Papiſts, in general, conſidering her but as a Queen *de facto*, believed they might, with a ſafe Conſcience, aſſiſt in depoſing her, whenever an Opportunity offer'd. *To which End*, ſhe had for her conſtant Enemies the *Pope* and *Spain*; always *ſome*, ſometimes *all the other* Catholick Powers in *Europe*, with all the Papiſts in *England*, *Scotland* and *Ireland*. As ſhe was conſtantly in Danger on this Account, ſo it was her principal Care to guard againſt it: It was always uppermoſt with her; the whole Policy of her Reign turned chiefly upon this Hinge. Thus, never loſing Sight of her Danger, ſhe *wonderfully* kept her *Crown*, and preſerved her Proteſtant Subjects in great Tranquillity, amidſt the ſecret and open Attacks of her own and their Enemies both at home and abroad. *Rapin*, Vol. II. p. 57, &c.

them were *directly*, *notoriouſly* and *avowedly* in the Intereſt of the *Pretender*, at the *Acceſſion* of *his late Majeſty*; that (*as a Party*) they have never given any tolerable Proof, ——— Proof did I ſay? not the leaſt Sign of being reconciled to the *Proteſtant Succeſſion*; unleſs a conſtant virulent Oppoſition, for twenty-five Years ſucceſſively, to all the Meaſures of the eſtabliſhed Government, upon all Occaſions, and in all Shapes whatſoever, can be accounted *ſuch*.—If we conſider what has been the Practice of *France* heretofore upon our *Elections* and *Councils*, and what is her *preſent Power* and *Policy*; how, beſides what * Biſhop *Burnet* tells us of *French* Gold in K. *William*'s Reign, we can many of us recollect the current Plenty of it, in the Time of a *Tory Parliament*, and a *Tory Adminiſtration*, at the latter End of Q. *Anne*'s (but which has diſappeared ſince that Time.)——— If it is conſidered that we have Reaſon to apprehend the Readineſs of FRANCE, at a particular Juncture, to ply us again in the ſame Way, ſhe having lately practiſed her *Liberality* †, with much Succeſs, upon other States in *Europe* ——— If in the preſent Conjuncture of Affairs, we have particular

* *Burnet*'s Hiſtory, *Vol.* 2. *p.* 257.

† Monſieur *Colbert*, the *French* Ambaſſador in *London*, ſent to gain or corrupt the *Engliſh* Court and Council of K. *Charles* II. in order to induce them to break the *Triple League*, which was made to check the Power of *France*, has this Expreſſion in a Letter denoting the Succeſs of his Negotiations: *I have at laſt made them ſenſible of the whole Extent of his Majeſty's Liberality.* Rapin, *Vol.* II. p. 653.

ticular Reaſon to be upon our Guard againſt her *Arts*, as well as *Arms*——— If we conſider how much *this Scheme* is made a Point of, and *by whom*, there is room to ſuſpect the worſt about it; inaſmuch as if this Power ſhould be taken out of the Hands of the *Crown*, which, at preſent, is but a reaſonable, a *moderate* Counterbalance to the *Deſigns* and *Practices* of our *ſo potent Neighbour* and *natural Enemy*, the Scene would then be changed from what, in another View, is, at beſt, Abſurdity, to *real* and *imminent Danger*. I hope we ſhall not be ſenſible of it, when it is too late!——— that we ſhall not thus give Occaſion, not the Chance of an Occaſion to have it ſaid,——— Oh BRITAIN, **Thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf!**

P. S. IT was owing to an Accident that this Tract, tho' committed to the Preſs above a Fortnight before, was not wholly printed off on the 29th of *January*; when it was laid aſide, with an Intent to be ſuppreſſed, as a Work then judg'd *out of Seaſon*. But the Author finding ſince that the Controverſy to which it relates, has not wholly ceaſed *without Doors*, for the ſame Reaſons, and upon the ſame Motives which indue'd his writing at firſt, has upon ſecond Thoughts reſolved to publiſh it; which, as the Caſe was, he thought he might do, *jure quaſi poſtliminii*.

FINIS.